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Book Review: A Nomadic pedagogy about technology: Teaching the ongoing process of becoming ethnotechnologically literate, by J. R. Dakers

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Dakers, J. R. (2023). Nomadic pedagogy about technology: Teaching the ongoing process of becoming ethnotechnologically literate.

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As a teacher of the Hangarau (Māori-medium Technology) curriculum, I found Dakers' early works introducing technological literacy fascinating (Dakers, 2005; 2006; 2014). They supported me strongly in thinking about how I would address the strand of the curriculum called Ngā Āhuatanga o te Hangarau (Concepts of Hangarau), where students and teachers engage in debates around values and ethics of Hangarau practice. So, when I heard of the new title, I was very keen to add it to my reading list. It continues in the vein that Dakers has started in. It is not an easy read, but it is a valuable read. Dakers continues his argument about how essential it is to ensure that there is a place for the teaching of technological literacy within the technology curriculum learning area in at least the compulsory education sector.

The identified problem that functions as the foundation for this book and its arguments, is the problem that technological literacy is not being taught in most technology education contexts, but, as Dakers (2023) says,

> Rather than trying to resurrect technological literacy, which has been tried again and again over the years to no lasting avail, I will propose that a new subject entitled ethnotechnological literacy needs to be developed, utilising a new nomadic pedagogy. (p. xii)

So, the proposed solution to the disconnect between research and classroom practice has led to Dakers reframing the argument, which, in my eyes, is the first strength of this text. In this review, I will share three further strengths and one little niggle, which equate to the highest recommendation to read this text, as it can support you in your teaching practice and in your research!

Three Strengths

Introduction to Relevant Philosophers

Dakers provides a clear introduction to key philosophers of technology education. You can be completely unfamiliar with the key philosophers that Dakers has drawn on in his argument because he leads the reader through his interpretation of their key concepts. He uses extended quotes to illustrate some of the reasons why he has reached the conclusions that he has arrived at, allowing the reader to engage with the philosophers' own words.

Dakers' earlier works were also influenced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Dakers does not assume that the reader has prior knowledge of these philosophers. He logically and systematically introduces the concepts that support his incorporation of 'nomadology' into his proposed solution. He also explains his reasons: Why Deleuze? When perceiving technology as dynamic, fluid, and ever-changing, Deleuze's notion of 'becoming' is essential.

Engaging and Logical Writing Style

Daker's writing style demonstrates to me that he is both a great teacher and a strong researcher. The book and its arguments are clearly laid out in the first chapter, and then Dakers guides the reader through his argument, reminding us at his key points, where he's up to in his argument, what is coming next and why it's important to remember this for us, as readers. With philosophical texts this approach can be vital in supporting the reader in their digestion of significant ideas, their rumination on foundational concepts… in the process of getting our head around an academic argument.

Clear Illustrations

Dakers uses a range of examples to illustrate key points he is making in the book which help the reader make sense of his key ideas. Some examples include, Dakers drawing from movies (Charlie Chaplin), literature (from Virginia Woolf to Moby Dick and The Lorax), popularised physics scenarios (Schrödinger's cat), Wikipedia and Youtube clips. The examples were strong and had me opening tabs while reading, to follow the tangents in the book. They are consistently effective, to the degree that made it difficult to choose just one example as an illustration to include in the review – But, when explaining assemblage theory and the corresponding notion of boundaries – Dakers uses the example of the unification of Germany to explain the notion of boundaries:

> Prior to its unification, Germany comprised two distinct countries: East and West Germany. These became separated after the war. It literally had a part physical boundary in the shape of a wall. Before the war, the whole country was Nazi Germany. This later divided and then reunified. (p. 83)

It is immediately clear to me, as a reader, that boundaries change. This notion of boundaries is used by Deleuze, who sees technological outcomes as assemblages with these ever-changing boundaries, or, as Dakers so eloquently puts it, "in other words, there is no such thing as technology, only an ongoing evolution of the concept of technology" (p. 83).

Accessibility

My one niggle was that, at times, I needed to type out awkward URLs to gain access to the illustrated ideas. It may have been nice to collate the URLs using a bit.ly or QR code. But overall, this book is a must-have for researchers and teachers alike. I know that I, for one, am very glad to have my own copy of this text.

So what?

The concepts in this text and the strength of the argument make it an invaluable acquisition for the technology teacher or the school leader who is looking to expand their technology department. Likewise, as a lecturer in the initial teacher education sector, I find value in the arguments – particularly in the volatility of the educational climate today, it is essential that we have strong voices and sound arguments to use in our ongoing struggles to validate and celebrate technology education, whether in the compulsory education sector, or beyond.

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